

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-37 are pending. By this amendment, claims 1 and 18 are amended.

The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 13-17, 24, 26-33, 36 and 37 is appreciated. However, for the reasons set forth below, it is submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 10, 18, 25 and 34 under 35 USC 103 over Nowatzky (US Pat. 6,262,823) in view of Bottle (US Pat. 5,535,032) and Das (US Pat. 5,703,708) and rejects claims 3-9, 19 and 35 under 36 USC over these references and further in view of Yamaguchi (US Pat. 6,323,983). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites: A multiplexing/demultiplexing system comprising:

a multiplexor comprising:

a first plurality of optical switches having a plurality of outputs;

a first plurality of optical delay elements coupled to and selectively actuating said optical switches;

a source of optical light coupled to said delay elements; and

an optical combiner coupled to said plurality of outputs and a source of framing pulses.

Independent claims 18 and 34 include similar recitations. The Office Action refers to Nowatzky element 436 as optical modulators and to element 431 as optical delay elements. The claims of the present application recite a plurality of optical switches and a plurality of optical delay elements. Nowatzky does not disclose or suggest a plurality of optical delay elements coupled to and selectively actuating the optical switches. In Nowatzky, the delay element 431 follows the modulator 436, and hence does not selectively actuate optical switches as required by

the claims. Claim 34 recites inputting an output of each of said delay elements to a control beam input of the respective one of the optical switches. In Nowatzky, delay element 431 follows the modulator 436 and hence does not input an output of the delay element into a control beam input of the optical switches as required by claim 34. It would not have been obvious to move the delay element 431 to before the optical modulator 436 in Nowatzky, because the delay element 431 functions to insert data signal between the framing pulses, and the data signals are input on line 435 to the modulator. See col. 3, lines 50-64. Thus, if the delay element is moved to before the modulator 436, the delay element 431 will not be able to perform its function, because there will be no data to insert between the framing pulses. The secondary references do not solve these deficiencies.

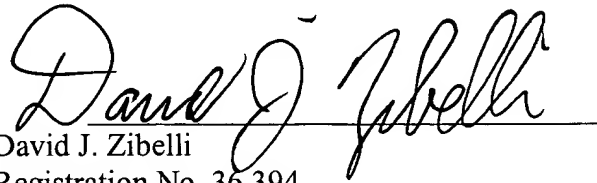
Moreover, if the optical modulator of Nowatzky was modified to be an optical switch, Nowatzky would not function for its intended purpose. In particular, the optical modulator 436 receives the bit stream TxData on line 432 and the modulator 436 converts it to an optical signal. An optical switch functions to switch signals not convert a bit stream to an optical signal. Thus, if the modulator 436 of Nowatzky was modified to be an optical switch as suggested, it would not be able to convert the bit stream to an optical signal, and would not function for its intended purpose.

Further, Nowatzky discloses a modulator 436, not a plurality of modulators and delay element 431, not a plurality of delay elements. For these reasons, it is submitted that the claims would not have been obvious over the cited references.

For at least the above reasons, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration and allowance are solicited.

The Office is authorized to charge any fees due under 37 CFR §§ 1.16, 1.17 or 1.136 to deposit account 11-0600. Should there be any questions concerning this matter, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Zibelli", is written over a horizontal line.

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